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ABSTRACT

To gather data on library use by students at South Seattle Community College (SSCC), questionnaires were distributed to individuals in the library and, through instructors, to students in classrooms. Responses were received from 549 members of the campus community, 62% of whom were vocational students and 22% of whom were liberal arts students. Analyses of the responses indicated the following: (1) 52% of the respondents indicated that they used the library at least once a week, 13% indicated that they never used the library, and another 10% indicated that they almost never used it; (2) 46% of the vocational students were frequent users, compared to 64% of the liberal studies students; (3) 63% of the non-native English speakers were frequent users of the library, compared to 45% of the native speakers; (4) 55% of all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the library was a comfortable and inviting place to study and work; (5) another 55% agreed that the library staff was helpful and effective; (6) 43% indicated that library resources were adequate all or most of the time for their class assignments; (7) with respect to respondents' information literacy, 45% of those who answered the question indicated that they used the computer catalog to locate materials, 29% said that they asked staff for help, 5% indicated that they asked fellow students, and 22% said that they browsed or located materials in some other way; and (8) 45% had taken a library orientation through one of their classes and 15% had taken a library techniques class. The survey instrument is appended. (KP)

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ED 381 217

South Seattle Community College

Instructional Resources Library User Study

March, 1993

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Introduction

The SSCC Library User Survey was developed by librarians Sharon Simes and Randy Nelson and administered to 549 individuals. One hundred and fifty-six (or 28%) of the surveys were administered in the library and 387 (71%) were administered by instructors to their students. An attempt was made to get representation of students from all instructional divisions.

This report is organized into the following five sections:

I. Overview of Survey Population
II. Library Usage
III. Student Ratings of Library Environment, Staff and Resources
IV. Information Literacy
V. Appendix: Copy of Survey Instrument

A written summary is presented at the front of each section. A collection of student verbatim responses to question #22, "Please share any ideas you may have about how the SSCC library can improve services," is included at the back of Section III.

To conserve time and provide for maximum flexibility in the use of the graphs/charts, page numbers have not been added to this report. A file of the raw output is on file in the Institutional Effectiveness Office.

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I. Overview of Survey Population

Five hundred and forty-nine individuals took the SSCC Library User Survey. Of these respondents, 62% were vocational students, 22% liberal arts students and 17% were enrolled in some other kind of program (i.e. ESL, Continuing Education). Eighty-seven percent or 475 of the respondents were SSCC students, 4% were CWU students and 2% were not students.

All programs on campus were represented. Programs with the largest representation were Liberal Studies (20%), Engineering and Industrial Technology (12%), and Business and Office (11%). The programs with the smallest representation were High School and Duwamish (each with three students).

Sixty-three percent of the respondents were enrolled in a degree program, 23% in a certificate program and 15% were enrolled in some other program. Eighty-seven percent were full-time students.

Fifty-three percent of the respondents were male and for 37% English was not their first language. Forty-eight percent of those surveyed belonged to an ethnic minority group, while 52% were white (including Eastern European).

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II. Library Usage

The first question presented to survey respondents was how often they used the SSCC library. Fifty-two percent of the individuals surveyed for this study use the SSCC library at least once a week. Eight percent of the respondents use the library once a week, 16% use it a couple of times per week and 22% are daily users of the library. Twenty-three percent of those surveyed use the library almost never (10%) or never (13%). The 312 vocational students who make up 62% of the survey population tend to use the library less frequently than students who are concentrating on Liberal Studies. Forty-six percent of vocational students are frequent users of the library (using it at least once per week) compared to 64% of Liberal Studies students. Twenty-eight percent of vocational students have never or almost never used the library, compared to only 12% of Liberal Studies students.

The most common use of the library by survey respondents is to study (indicated by 305 or 56% of the survey respondents), followed by borrowing materials for class assignments (240 individuals or 43%), photocopying (212 respondents or 39%) and reading library materials such as magazines, newspapers, etc. (170 respondents or 31%). The least common reason for using the library (41 respondents or 8%) was to receive instruction in the use of the library.

Respondents were asked what might make them use the library more. The suggestion which captured the largest number of responses was that the library be open on weekends (160 responses), followed by instructors requiring library use (143 responses), a more comfortable environment (142), a better book collection (138), computers for word processing (133), and more quiet (133). It is interesting to note that students felt it would have a much greater effect on the frequency of their library use for instructors to require rather than merely suggest they use the library (142 responses compared to 72).

For purposes of this analysis, library usage was collapsed into two categories (frequent and infrequent) and cross-tabulated with a number of other variables in order to examine usage patterns more closely. Again, 52% of the survey population are frequent users of the library (use it at least once per week), and 48% are infrequent users (use the library a few times per quarter or less).

Instructional programs for which the survey population had the highest population of frequent library users include Computer Technology (10 compared to two students or 83.3%), Engineering/Industrial Technology (52 students complared to 12 students or 81%), Management and Supervision (nine students compared to three or 75%), and Business and Office (43 students compared to 15 or 74%). Those programs with the least number of frequent library users in the survey population were Food Sciences (four students compared to 43 or 8.5%) and Cosmotology (three students compared to 30 or 9%). Sixty-four percent of Liberal Studies students were frequent users; 41% of ESL students were.

All ethnic groups except Eastern European and Hispanic showed a higher percentage of frequent library use than Caucasian students (other than Eastern European). African students appear to have the highest percentage of frequent users in their population group (78%), followed by Pacific Islanders (75%), Southeast Asian (74%), Chinese (74%) and Other Asian--not including Japanese (70%). Sixty-eight percent of Japanese students are frequent library users. The ethnic groups with the lowest percent of frequent library users include

Eastern European students (22%), Hispanic (30%) and Caucasian/White students--other than Eastern European (41%).

Degree students use the library more than certificate or other program students. Sixty-three percent of degree program students are frequent library users, compared to only 30% of certificate students and 39% of students in other programs. As might be expected, full-time students use the library more than part-time students, but not by that much. Fifty-three percent of full-time students are frequent library users, compared to 43% of part-time students.

Probably one of the most interesting statistics in this group is that people for whom English is not their first language use the library more than native English speakers. Sixty-three percent of the "second-language" speakers of English are frequent library users, compared to only 45% of those for whom English is their first language.

Finally, men are slightly more likely to be frequent library users than women: 53% of the males in the survey population are frequent library users, compared to 50% of the women.

A cross-tabulation of reasons for using the library and variables which might increase library use was done to see if frequent and infreqent users differed according to these dimensions. As far as reasons for using the library go, patterns between frequent and infrequent users are quite similar. As might be expected, more frequent than infrequent users utilize the library more in all areas, with the exception of viewing or listening to audio-visual materials and borrowing materials for other educational purposes, where a higher percentage of infrequent than frequent users selected those reasons. The discrepancy between frequent and infrequent users appears to be largest when it comes to studying and to borrowing materials for class assignments. One hundred seventy-six or 65% of frequent users said they used the library to study, compared to 116 or 46% of infrequent users; 124 or 46% of frequent users use the library to borrow materials for class assignments, compared to 97 or 39% of infrequent users.

Frequent and infrequent users agree closely on variables which could increase their library use. About the same percentage would increase their library use if instructor required it, if the library were open on weekends and if the library had more adequate resources. Although infrequent users are also concerned about quiet, comfort, state of the book collection and availability of computers for word processing, frequent users are more concerned about these issues than infrequent users. Thirty-one percent of the frequent users indicated more quiet as a motivation for increasing their library use, compared to 19% of the infrequent users; 32% of the frequent users said they would use the library more if it were more comfortable, compared to 22% of the infrequent users; 27% of the frequent users would be motivated by a better book collection, compared to 20% of the infrequent users; and 27% of the frequent users, as compared to 21% of the infrequent users, said they would use the library more if computers for word processing were available. In addition, a higher percentage of frequent (16%) than infrequent (10%) users said they would use the library more if it had more computer databases.

Several other survey questions dealt with the number of articles checked out by students and the extent to which they utilized audio-visual services. Of the whole survey population, 37% checked out three or more books, magazines or pamphlets per quarter (7% checked out 10 or more; 30% checked out 3 to 9); while 63% checked out less than three articles per quarter (30% checked out 1 or 2 per quarter, and 33% checked out none).

Only 33% of the individuals surveyed use audio-visual materials: 20% use one or two per quarter, 10% use 3 to 9 and 7% use 10 or more of these materials per quarter.
Most of those who have been referred to audio-visual services have been referred by their instructors. Twenty-two percent of the survey population were referred by instructors, 8% by other students, and 5% by librarians. Sixty-five percent of the survey population were not referred to audio-visual services. Of the audio-visual services available in the library, those which get the highest use by students are videocassettes (utilized by 117 students or 21% of the survey population), followed by the audiocassette duplication service (used by 45 or 8% of the respondents).

III. Student Ratings of Library Environment, Staff and Resources

In general, survey respondents agree that the library is a comfortable and inviting place to study and work. Fifty-five percent agree or strongly agree, and only 19% disagree or strongly disagree. The majority of the survey respondents (55%) also agree that the library staff is helpful and effective: 15% strongly agree, 40% agree, 37% have no opinion and 8% either disagree or strongly disagree.

Frequent library users tend to agree more than infrequent users that the library is a comfortable and inviting place to study and work and that the library staff is helpful and effective. As might be expected, infreqent library users tend more often than frequent library users not to have an opinion about these questions.

Student ratings of the various collections in the SSCC library tend to cluster around the mid-score of 3, ("adequate"). The highest rated collection is magazines and newspapers, followed by current events and recreational reading. The lowest rated collections are "your area of study" and computer science, but again the mean ratings do not deviate very far from "3".

Student ratings of SSCC library resources are more interesting when the item asking for ratings of collections in the students' areas of study is broken down by instructional program. The highest rated collections are ESL (3.4), Management/Supervision (3.2), Business and Office (3.1) and Computer Technology (3.1). (Duwamish and Continuing Education must be disregarded here because it is impossible to guess what "area of study" they may be referring to.). The lowest rated collections are Landscape/Horticulture (2.1) and Floristry (2.5). Collections in Liberal Studies (2.8), Aviation (2.7), Cosmetology (2.8), Engineering and Industrial Technology (2.7) and Food Sciences (2.7) are also rated as less than "adequate". The motor vehicles collection, on the other hand, is rated as "adequate" by students in that program (3.0).

When asked the question, "Are library resources adequate for your class assignments," 43% of respondents said that they were adequate either all of the time (8%) or most of the time (35%). Twenty percent responded that library resources were adequate, but often checked-out or missing, 8% said they were adequate only if one includes materials available from other District colleges, 11% said it was possible to complete most assignments but with difficulty, and 17.6% said they were unable to find sufficient assignment-related resources at the SSCC library.

When individual instructional programs are looked at, a number of differences emerge in how students regard the adequacy of resources for class assignments. Students who indicate they are most satisfied with the adequacy of library resources to do assignments are those from Motor Vehicles (64% indicate the resources are adequate either all or most of the time), Business & Office (56%), Management and Supervision (60%) and Engineering and Industrial Technology (54%). Those who tend to experience the most problem in finding resources to do their class assignments include those from Cosmotology (100% perceive there to be some problem in finding resources), Landscape & Horticulture (85% perceive there to be a problem) and Food Sciences (75% feel there is some problem finding adequate resources for class assignments).

As far as frequent and infrequent library users go, frequent users tend to be more confident of their ability to find resources most of the time and a larger percentage of infrequent users say they are unable to find sufficient assignment-related resources.

IV. Information Literacy

Several questions in the survey were designed to get some measure of the degree of "information literacy" of the respondents. When asked how they most often located materials in the library, 185 individuals--or 45% of those who answered the question--said they used the computer catalog. One hundred and twenty-one individuals (29%) said they asked staff for help, 20 (5%) asked fellow students, and 90 respondents (22%) said they browsed or located materials in some other way. Only 20% of the respondents had used interlibrary loan to request materials from other libraries. Fifty-two percent of the respondents, however, had used a print or computerized periodical index, and 34% had used a newspaper index on CD-ROM to find a newspaper article.

Four-hundred and two or 73% of the respondents said they have a library card from a public library: 33% of the respondents said they have a card from the King County Libraries, 7% said they have a card from another library, and 34% said they have a card from the Seattle Public Library. Twenty percent of the respondents said they do not have a public library card. Frequent and infrequent SSCC library users show the same pattern of public library card acquisition.

Fifteen percent of the survey population has taken the library techniques class and 45% have had a library orientation through one of their classes. Forty-two percent of the respondents said they keep current about their fields by reading magazines in the library and 41% said they have used library materials to find information about careers.

When information literacy variables are broken down by library usage it becomes clear that people who use the library more are more information literate than those who don't. Whether frequent library useage leads to information literacy or information literacy leads to frequent library use is not possible to tell by the data. What is possible to see from the data, however, is that specific training in the use of the library, either through a library techniques class or an orientation offered as part of another class, definitely promotes information literacy. Thirty-one percent of those who had taken the library techniques class and 27% of those experiencing an orientation had used interlibrary loan, compared to 17% of those who had neither of those two types of training. This pattern repeats itself for the other variables related to information literacy. Forty-nine percent of those who took a library techniques class and 51% of those who had an orientation use the computer catalog, while only 41% of those without special training do. Seventy-seven percent of those having taken a library techniques class and 71% of those having had an orientation have used a print or computerized periodical index; only 48% of those without that training have. Sixty-five percent of those who have taken the library techniques class and 51% of those who have had a library orientation have used a newspaper index, compared to only 31% of those without specialized training. Fifty-one percent of those with the library techniques class background and 47% of those who have had a library orientation keep current about their field of interest by reading magazines in the library. This compares to 40% of those without that training. Finally, 58% of those who have taken the library techniques class and 54% of those who have had the library orientation have used materials in the library to find information about careers. Of those who have had no specific library training, only 39% have used such materials. It is obvious from this data that specific training in library useage leads to information literacy as defined by the variables in this survey instrument.

Do not mark outside this line

SOUTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES CENTER
LIBRARY USER SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to help SSCC Library staff serve students better.
Please mark your answers by filling in the correct "bubbles" with a #2 pencil.
Thank you very much for your participation.

1. How often to you use the SSCC library?
- Daily
- A couple of times per week
- Once a week
- A few times per quarter
- Not often
- Almost Never
- I have Never used the SSCC library

2. Why do you use the library? Please mark all that apply.
- To borrow materials for class assignments
- To borrow materials for other educational purposes
- To study
- To borrow materials for personal enrichment or recreation
- To get help from a librarian
- To view or listen to audio-visual materials
- To use materials placed on reserve by instructors
- To photocopy
- To attend a class being held in the library
- To check out magazines
- To receive instruction in the use of the library
- To read library materials (such as magazines, newspapers, etc.)
- Not Applicable - I never use the library

3. I would use the SSCC Library more if: (Please mark all that apply)
- My instructors required it
- My instructors suggested it
- My friends and/or fellow students used it
- It were quieter
- It were a more comfortable place to study
- It were open on weekends
- It were open after 10:00 p.m.
- The staff were more helpful or approachable
- I could afford to buy a student photo ID card
- It had more adequate resources
- It had a better book collection
- It had a better magazine collection
- It had more places to view television and videocassettes
- It had more computer databases
- It had computers for word-processing
- It had more up-to-date equipment
- It were possible to search the library catalog from home by computer
- Other_____

4. I do not use the SSCC library very often because
- I use another community college library that is more convenient
- I use a public library
- I use the University of Washington Libraries
- I use another university library
- I study and use my resources at home
- Other
- Not applicable - I do use the library often

5. The library is a comfortable and inviting place to study and work.
Strongly agree Agree No opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

6. The library staff is helpful and effective.
Strongly agree Agree No opinion Disagree Strongly disagree

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SSCC LIBRARY USER SURVEY

IF YOU ANSWERED "I HAVE NEVER USED THE SSCC LIBRARY" ON QUESTION #1, PLEASE SKIP NOW TO QUESTION #23 ON THE FOURTH PAGE OF THIS SURVEY. IF YOU HAVE USED THE SSCC LIBRARY, EVEN ONCE, PLEASE CONTINUE TO THE NEXT QUESTION.

7. To the best of your ability, please rate how adequate the SSCC Library's resources are in the following collections:

	Excellent	Very Good	Adequate	Not Adequate	Poor	No Opinion
The overall collection						
Your area of study						
Magazine/newspapers						
Videotape collection						
Other audio-visual collections						
Reference collection						
ESL collection						
GED/Adult Basic Education						
Cultural diversity						
Children's literature						
Self-help and personal development						
Employment and careers						
Current events						
Recreational reading						
Humanities						
Social Sciences						
Science and Mathematics						
Computer Science						

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SSCC LIBRARY USER SURVEY

8. How many books, magazines or pamphlets do you check out per quarter?
10 or more 3 to 9 1 or 2 None

9. How many times per quarter do you use audio-visual materials?
10 or more 3 to 9 1 or 2 None

10. Who referred you to audio-visual services? Not referred Instructor Librarian Other student

11. What audio-visual services have you used?
Audiocassette duplication
Videocassettes
Audiocassettes or phonograph records
Filmstrips or slides
Calculators

12. Are library resources adequate for your class assignments?
All of the time
Most of the time
Adequate, but often checked-out or missing
Adequate only if one includes materials available from other District colleges
Possible to complete most assignments but with difficulty
Unable to find sufficient assignment-related resources

13. Have you requested books or periodical articles from other libraries by interlibrary loan? Yes No

14. How do you most often locate materials in the library?
Computer catalog
Ask staff for help
Ask fellow students for help
Browse
Other_____

15. Have you used either a print or computerized periodical index to find magazine articles (e.g. ProQuest)? Yes No

16. Have you used a newspaper index such as NEWSBANK or SEATTLE TIMES on CD-ROM to find a newspaper article?
Yes No

17. Have you taken the Library Techniques class? Yes No

18. Have any of your classes had a library orientation in the library? Yes No

19. Do you have a public library card?
King County Libraries
Other public library
Seattle Public Library
I do not have a public library card

20. Do you keep current about your field of interest by reading magazines in the library? Yes No

21. Have you used materials in the library to find information about careers? Yes No

22. Please share any ideas you may have about how the SSCC library can improve services.

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SSCC LIBRARY USER SURVEY

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE:

23. Are you...
An SSCC student A CWU student Another student Not a student

24. What is your program of study?
High School
Liberal Studies
Aviation
Motor Vehicles
Business and Office
Cosmetology
Engineering and Industrial Technology
Food Sciences
Landscape/Horticulture

Management/Supervision
Floristry
ESL
Computer Technology
Programs at Duwamish
Continuing Education
Other_____

25. Are you enrolled in...
A certificate program A degree program Other

26. Are you...
full-time part-time

27. Is English your first language?
Yes No

28. Are you...
Male Female

29. With which ethnic group do you identify?

Southeast Asian
Japanese
Chinese
Other Asian
Pacific Islander
Native American, Eskimo or Aleut
Hispanic
Black or African American
African
Eastern European

Other Caucasian (White) Other_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL OUT THIS IMPORTANT SURVEY.

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